

Implementation of the Doha Programme of Action
for the Least Developed Countries:

Progress Report

(Prepared by OHRLLS for the CEB High-level Committee on Programmes at its forty-sixth session)

I. Fifth United Nations Conference on LDCs

A. Background

1. The Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5) was held in two parts, the first part in New York, on 17 March 2022, and the second part in Doha, from 5 to 9 March 2023 (see [A/CONF.219/2023/3](#)).
2. The General Assembly endorsed the Doha Programme of Action (DPoA) for the decade 2022–2031 on 1 April 2022 (resolution [76/258](#)). In paragraph 301 Member states “welcome the work of the Inter-agency Consultative Group for Least Developed Countries, led by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, invite CEB and the High-level Committee on Programmes to support the coordination and follow-up of the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action on a system-wide basis, and also invite the Secretary-General, in his capacity as CEB Chair, to include the implementation of the Programme of Action in the agenda of the Board.”

B. Actions to date

3. The LDC5 Conference was attended by 5,000 participants, including 47 Heads of State or Government and 130 Ministers and Vice-Ministers. They called for developed countries to urgently provide the most vulnerable countries with the assistance they need to drive socio-economic and environmental development. Corporate leaders together with civil society, youth and other partners shared plans, innovations, and recommendations in several areas ranging from enhancing the participation of LDCs in international trade and regional integration to addressing climate change, supporting structural transformation, strengthening global partnerships, supporting graduation, and leveraging the power of science, technology, and innovation.
4. The Secretary-General convened a United Nations system high-level event during LDC5, which was attended by heads and senior representatives from 36 United Nations entities. The high-level event aimed to ensure the full mobilization of the United Nations system in support of the LDCs, which is expected to result in enhanced coordination of this support, including prioritization of the LDCs in programmes of work, within the existing mandates and budgetary resources, and enhanced technical support to overcome challenges specific to the LDCs, making use of synergies with the Decade of Action. The Secretary-General stressed the importance of taking the [deliverables of the DPoA](#) into account when programming actions and activities. He urged participants to leverage collective capacities to support LDCs effectively.
5. OHRLLS is mobilizing the entire United Nations system in support of the implementation of the DPoA. The first meeting of the [Inter-Agency Consultative Group \(IACG\) on LDCs](#) after LDC5 was held in June 2023 and discussed progress in implementing commitments announced in Doha, and participants announced additional commitments. As requested in the DPoA, OHRLLS is drafting a roadmap for its implementation identifying specific roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders.
6. During LDC5 the implementation of five key deliverables of the DPoA was discussed. These include an online university to invest in youth and education, an Investment Support Centre to boost foreign direct investment and accelerate structural transformation, a Food Stockholding Mechanism to enhance resilience against shocks and food insecurity, and a Resilience Building Mechanism to safeguard development gains from various shocks. OHRLLS is undertaking mapping exercises on available support and existing initiatives in these areas to identify gaps and provide options for establishing related mechanisms and systems, in full coordination with the United Nations system.
7. In addition, the DPoA welcomes the establishment of a Sustainable Graduation Support Facility (in short, iGRAD) jointly developed by OHRLLS, as Chair of the [Inter-Agency Task Force on LDC Graduation Support](#)

(IATF), and DESA, as the secretariat for the Committee for Development Policy, as a concrete, country-led solution of dedicated capacity development support. Work is under way to further strengthen coordinated and coherent United Nations system support and bring together country-specific integrated graduation-related advisory and capacity-building services serving as a repository and clearing house of initiatives and projects pursued in support of these countries.

C. Recommendations

8. The Secretary-General has recommended that entities of the United Nations system should scale up substantive and technical assistance to the least developed countries in a timely, long-term, predictable and flexible manner. The system should also play an active and catalytic role in representing those countries at the forums in which they are not represented ([A/77/984](#), para 101).
9. Furthermore, entities of the United Nations development system are called upon to actively support the implementation of the DPoA at the national, subregional, regional and global levels, in close cooperation and partnership with the World Bank Group and the international financial and development institutions, and to integrate the Programme of Action into their strategic plans and annual work programmes and reporting at all levels, as mandated by the DPoA (para. 291). This includes contributions to implement its concrete deliverables.

II. Investment promotion for the LDCs

A. Background

10. The DPoA has a strong focus on investment promotion and in paragraph 260 includes a target to “Adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries”.
11. In 2022, foreign direct investment (FDI) in LDCs declined by 16% to \$22 billion, 1.5% of the world total according to UNCTAD. Investment in sectors related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in LDCs also remained weak.

B. Actions to date

12. An Inter-Agency Technical Committee (IATC) was created as per recommendations that were taken note of by the High-level Committee on Programmes at its thirty-third session and, subsequently, by the CEB at its first regular session of 2017 (see [CEB/2017/HLCP33/INF.1](#)).
13. The first phase of the multi-agency *Capacity Development Programme for Investment Promotion Agencies of Least Developed Countries* is completed. Implementing partners are UNCTAD, the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) at the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNCTAD, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), UN-OHRLS and the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA). The project’s implementing partners built an online learning platform and dedicated training programme on investment promotion for LDCs. As part of the programme, UNCTAD produced three pedagogical videos on the promotion and facilitation of investment on the topics: investment in food security, promotion of investment in the health sector, and digitalization of investment promotion and facilitation, with best practice examples. Over 60 officials from 20 LDCs followed the part-time training programme over a six-month period. The officials came from Bangladesh, Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gambia, Haiti, Kiribati, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Somalia, South Sudan, Timor Leste, Togo, Tuvalu and Uganda. Nine out of ten participants stated that their institution would benefit from the training that they had received.

14. During 2023, the *Capacity Development Programme for Investment Promotion Agencies of Least Developed Countries* received extra funds from the Enhanced Integrated Framework for additional technical assistance activities including a one-week training workshop for investment promotion officials from seven selected LDCs hosted by the ILO Training Center in Turin, Italy. Topics addressed included FDI trends in times of poly-crisis, digital tools and investment promotion and facilitation services that target SDG-related projects. As part of the programme, UNCTAD conducted surveys among investment promotion agencies from LDCs and investors in LDCs. Results are presented in the publication “[Investment Promotion in LDCs: a Needs Assessment](#)”.
15. Twenty-one Investment Policy Reviews (IPR) of LDCs have been conducted. The [Investment Policy Review of Togo](#) was launched in 2023 and UNCTAD delivered a training workshop for investment promotion stakeholders in Togo which included officials from 24 government institutions. UNCTAD also worked with IPAs in Mali and Togo to implement electronic single windows for investment facilitation. Business licensing was made available online in Lesotho with the One-stop Business Facilitation Center. An IPR for the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) is underway and includes Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo.
16. During LDC5, UNCTAD and other implementing partners organized the side-event *Building capacity in investment promotion to advance the SDGs in LDCs*. The meeting focused on the challenges and opportunities faced by LDCs in the promotion and facilitation of investment in SDG-related sectors. The meeting had 50 participants including high-level representatives from international organizations, non-governmental organizations, policymakers and heads of IPAs from several LDCs including Comoros, Mali, Togo and Zambia.
17. UNIDO has been pursuing partnerships with international financial and development financial institutions and the business sector actors to ensure meaningful impact on projects and initiatives in LDCs. For example, UNIDO partnered with the World Bank and the International Trade Centre (ITC) to implement the “ACP-Business Friendly Programme” funded by the EU and the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States. The programme helped numerous countries, including LDCs such as Ethiopia, Senegal and Zambia, to improve investment promotion strategies and capacities of Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs), through the adoption of modern digital systems, notably the “Invest in ACP” Platform which showcases a range of SME-led investment opportunities for a more concrete engagement with potential foreign direct investors.

C. Recommendations

18. It is suggested that the members of the IATC on investment promotion work together to ensure follow-up to the Private Sector Forum held at the LDC5 Conference, especially with respect to investment promotion.
19. Relevant United Nations entities should also contribute to the establishment of an international investment support centre for least developed countries in the form of a one-stop shop to mobilize support for implementation of the investment promotion regime for least developed countries and graduated countries.

III. Technology Bank

A. Actions to date

20. The Technology Bank for LDCs has continued with consolidation and strengthening of the reforms and organizational restructuring that started in 2022, including advancing on the recruitment of staff to fill the new posts that the Governing Council endorsed in the sixth session. Parallel to the reforms at operational level, the recruitment of the next Managing Director has advanced with the support of the United Nations Office in Geneva. To ensure effective implementation of programmatic activities and mobilization of activities, the Technology Bank has streamlined its main activities into three distinct areas: (1) conducting Technology Needs Assessment (TNA); (2) identifying technologies based on TNAs and designing transfer of technology projects; and (3) implementing capacity-building at national level to ensure the sustainability of transferred

technologies and boost local technological learning and upgrading. In addition, the Technology Bank will pay greater attention to resource mobilization and partnership with key national and international stakeholders that can assist the Bank with implementation of projects. The Bank has begun restructuring and consolidating its business model and organizational design and structure based on the conclusions and recommendations of an independent functional review and an audit of the operations of the Technology Bank conducted by the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services covering the period January 2019 to September 2021.

21. Based on the findings of the 12 TNAs that the Bank has completed and validated to date, the Council has decided that the support provided by the Technology Bank should focus on four thematic areas. These are: (1) agriculture and food systems; (2) education and digital skills training; (3) health; and (4) environment and resilience-building. In the coming five years, the support that the Technology Bank avails to the LDCs, including graduating LDCs, will concentrate on technological solutions for challenges in these four thematic areas.
22. Technology needs assessments have emerged as an essential area of work for the Technology Bank since it enables the Bank to identify the specific sectors or economic activities that require technological solutions. The Technology Bank is aware that there are other international organizations that review and assess the science, technology and innovation (STI) capacities of countries, including their technology needs. However, none of these reviews and assessments are focused on the LDCs. The Technology Bank is the only United Nations organization that devotes resources to the technology needs assessment of LDCs with a view to formulating follow-up technical cooperation programmes in support of the LDCs. This makes it unique and exclusive to the LDCs.
23. The Doha Programme of Action for the LDCs has singled out the need for *“Leveraging the power of Science, Technology, and Innovation to fight multidimensional vulnerabilities”* as one of the six priority areas for the decade 2021-2030. In addition, the Programme of Action has identified the United Nations Technology Bank as a focal point for LDCs on STI-related issues. Given its strengthened mandate and responsibility, the Technology Bank will continue to improve and reinforce its capacity to conduct needs assessment and design and implement concrete projects that enable LDCs to find technological solutions to persistent development challenges. A high-quality technology needs assessment will enable the LDCs to identify and tailor appropriate technologies to specific sectors or economic activities that are aligned with national development objectives and the achievement of SDGs. The overarching objective is to maximize the impact on social and economic development and progress towards achieving the SDGs by leveraging science, technology, and innovation in support of the LDCs.

B. Ongoing projects in support of the LDCs

24. To date, 12 TNAs have been completed, 5 are ongoing, 2 are planned and 5 have been suspended. The TNA of Cambodia was launched in Phnom Penh in May 2023; the TNA of Bangladesh was validated virtually in June 2023; and the TNA of Djibouti is in the preparatory process for the validation to take place in September 2023. Discussions are ongoing with Malawi and Nepal to resume and complete their TNAs. In the second half of 2023, the TNAs of Lao PDR and Tanzania will be initiated based on a revised framework. The Tanzania TNA will be conducted in collaboration with the International Seabed Authority.
25. Within the thematic area of agriculture and food systems, the joint project with TUBITAK Bursa Test and Analysis Laboratory and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Türkiye for post-harvest loss management in The Gambia is to be implemented, with an estimated budget of USD 900,000. The project aims to train 40 farmers and small-scale enterprises within the capacity-building component, 2 scientists and 2 specialists to be trained through the training of trainers’ programme in Türkiye, and 20 scientists and 20 specialists to be trained in The Gambia.
26. The joint project with the International Seabed Authority, building and developing the capacities of LDCs in deep-seabed-related science, technology and innovation in support of sustainable development of blue

emerging economies, has begun its initial phase of implementation in Nepal and Tanzania, with national focal points being appointed in both countries. The project has an estimated budget of USD 100,000 and falls under the thematic area of environment, climate change and resilience.

27. Further, the project to provide sustainable and resilient rammed earth dwellings in Mozambique, with an estimated budget of USD 1,000,000 aims to train two construction engineers from Mozambique, along with engineers from the partnering Sakarya and Düzce universities will travel to conduct preliminary scientific assessments of the soil and materials available in Mozambique for the construction of houses. The project partners also include TUBITAK and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Türkiye.
28. Within the thematic area of health, the 'Hear, Listen and Speak' programme for all Bhutanese children is in place to help the Kingdom of Bhutan establish the continuum of care required to address hearing loss and ear disorders for children 0-14 years of age. It meets various government mandates to strengthen child health and education services in Bhutan and to reduce the impact of disability on the Bhutanese people's quality of life. This national programme is designed to address the complete continuum of care from identification to treatment to habilitation. It aims to build locally based professional capacity and services in early detection, hearing technology, and early intervention that are essential for Bhutanese children 0-6 years of age who are deaf or hard of hearing to have a chance to hear and speak. It also implements screening and ear and hearing care services for Bhutanese children 7-14 years of age with typical hearing to ensure they have healthy ears ongoing. To date, over 24,000 children have been screened across five districts, 2,900 children referred for further treatment, over 60 hearing aids fitted to 43 patients, 248 school health coordinators from nine districts trained and 6 audiologists and 18 ear, nose and throat technicians trained on new technologies transferred to the country.
29. The Technology Makers Lab project within the thematic area of education and digital skills development is a demand-driven and country-led project supported by different national and international partners. In the first half of 2023, the Technology Bank has advanced the implementation of this pilot project. As part of the in-kind contribution by the Ministry of Industry and Technology of Türkiye, five trainers and one center manager have already undergone two weeks of intensive in-person Training of Trainers programme in Ankara and Istanbul, Türkiye, with 240 children to be trained. As part of the expansion phase of the pilot project, the Technology Bank is liaising closely with the country to finalize a financial commitment of USD 5.5 million pledged by the African Development Bank (AfDB), which is expected to be received in the fourth quarter of 2023.